

wherein said controlled environment comprises air free of combustion exhaust gases and an airflow sufficient to substantially prevent an anaerobic condition around the vicinity of said plant portion; and

wherein said controlled environment is provided by controlling at least one of humidity, [rate of temperature change,] temperature, and airflow[, CO level, CO₂ level, O₂ level, and arrangement of said tobacco plant].

Please add new claims 69-82 as follows.

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~~69~~. (new) A process of substantially preventing the formation of at least one nitrosamine in a harvested tobacco plant, the process comprising:

drying at least a portion of the plant, while said portion is uncured, yellow, and in a state susceptible to having the formation of nitrosamines arrested, in a controlled environment and for a time sufficient to substantially prevent the formation of said at least one nitrosamine;

wherein said controlled environment comprises a flow of air sufficient to avoid an anaerobic condition around the vicinity of said plant portion; and

wherein said controlled environment is provided by controlling at least one of humidity, temperature, and airflow.

70. (new) The process of claim 69 wherein, following said drying in said controlled environment, the plant portion has a content of at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine selected from the group consisting of N'-nitrosonornicotine, 4-(N-nitrosomethylamino)-1-(3-pyridyl)-1-butanone, N'-nitrosoanatabine, and N'-nitrosoanabazine which at least 75% by weight lower than the content of said at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine in cured brown tobacco made from the same tobacco crop but which was cured in the absence of steps designed to reduce the content of said at least one nitrosamine.

71. (new) The process of claim 70, wherein the at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine is 4-(N-nitrosomethylamino)-1-(3-pyridyl)-1-butanone.

72. (new) The process of claim 70, wherein said content of at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine is at least about 90% by weight lower than the content of said at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine in said cured brown tobacco.

73. (new) The process of claim 72, wherein said content of at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine is at least about 95% by weight lower than the content of said at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine in said cured brown tobacco.

74. (new) The process of claim 69, wherein the airflow is at least about 70 CFM at 1" static pressure per cubic foot of volume.

75. (new) The process of claim 74, wherein the airflow is at least about 80 CFM at 1" static pressure per cubic foot of volume.

76. (new) A process of substantially preventing the formation of at least one nitrosamine in a tobacco plant, the process comprising:

heating at least a portion of a tobacco plant with a flow of air while said portion is uncured, yellow, and in a state susceptible to having formation of said at least one nitrosamine arrested, for a time sufficient to substantially prevent formation of said at least one nitrosamine;

wherein said flow of air is sufficient to avoid an anaerobic condition around the vicinity of said plant portion.

77. (new) The process of claim 76, wherein the air is heated to a temperature of from about 100°F to about 250°F.

78. (new) The process of claim 77, wherein the temperature is from about 160°F to about 170°F.

79. (new) The process of claim 76 wherein, following said drying in said controlled environment, the plant portion has a content of at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine selected from the group consisting of N'-nitrosonornicotine, 4-(N-nitrosomethylamino)-1-(3-pyridyl)-1-butanone, N'-